

VZCZCXRO0643

OO RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHTRO
DE RUEHRL #0717/01 1671323
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 161323Z JUN 09 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4357
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 000717

SIPDIS, NEA/IR, SAGSWA, DRL, ISN, EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/16/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GM](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN ELECTION UPDATE: MERKEL, STEINMEIER EXPRESS
CONCERN; MFA READOUT OF MEETING WITH IRANIAN AMBASSADOR

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Political Affairs Jeffrey Rathke
for reasons 1.4(b)/(d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Both German Chancellor Angela Merkel and FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier have publicly expressed their concerns about the Iranian presidential election aftermath, noting reports of irregularities and calling on the Iranian government to ensure freedom of assembly and freedom of the press. According to the MFA's Iran Desk, MFA State Secretary Silberberg also raised Germany's concerns with the Iranian Ambassador to Germany on June 15. Silberberg covered four areas of concern: the safety and freedom of movement of members of the press; the safety and security of the diplomatic corps and the German community in Iran; Germany's shock at the violent suppression of peaceful demonstrators; and Germany's doubts about the results of the June 12 Presidential elections. According to the Iran Desk, Iranian Ambassador Sheikh Attar said that the Embassy in Berlin had offered its assistance to German journalists on the ground in Tehran and steps by Iranian authorities were aimed only at guaranteeing journalists' safety. He also complained that some international media, specifically VOA and BBC, were "inciting the public to participate in illegal demonstrations" and that this was "interference in internal affairs." The MFA Iran Desk indicated that, following Steinmeier's very public lead, other EU countries were considering summoning the Iranian ambassadors in their respective capitals for similar discussions. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Germany's Chancellor and Foreign Minister have publicly registered their concerns about events in Iran following the June 12 Iranian presidential election. In a formal statement, FM Steinmeier said on June 14: "The course of the election in Iran raises many questions. Reports of irregularities are cause for concern. I expect from those responsible in Iran that they investigate these allegations and provide a comprehensive explanation. The violent actions by security forces against protesters is not acceptable, nor is the prevention of peaceful protests. We will continue to observe the situation on the ground very closely." On June 15, Chancellor Merkel said in a press conference that the Federal Government is very concerned about the situation in Iran. She condemned the wave of arrests during the demonstrations and called upon the government in Iran to guarantee freedom of assembly and freedom of the press. She also said that there should be a transparent review of the election results, since there had been allegations of irregularities.

¶3. (C) MFA Senior Iran Desk Officer Andreas Krueger confirmed to Iran Watcher June 16 that the Iranian Ambassador to Germany Alireza Sheikh Attar had been summoned to the MFA on June 15. This followed public statements by FM Steinmeier on June 14 that the MFA would summon Sheikh Attar. According to Krueger, State Secretary Reinhard Silberberg began the June 15 discussion by expressing the German government's concerns about the limitations put upon both Iranian domestic

as well as international press on the ground in Iran. Silberberg raised a number of "special cases" of Germany-affiliated journalists, including concerns about the well-being of Iranian staff members of German correspondents. (COMMENT: The "special cases" likely refer to reports that correspondents from Germany's two main television stations had been prevented from leaving their hotels by Iranian security services. END COMMENT.) Silberberg then noted that while the German Embassy in Tehran had not been the target of any serious incidents so far, the German government is nonetheless concerned about the safety and security of the diplomatic corps in Tehran and for the German community in all of Iran.

¶4. (C) Turning to the overall situation in Iran, Silberberg expressed the German Government's shock at the images from Tehran of the brutal suppression of peaceful demonstrations. He underscored Germany's expectations that the IRIG guarantee freedom of expression and assembly. Finally, Silberberg expressed doubts about the announced results of the June 12 election and noted the Supreme Leader's decision to support an investigation by the Guardian Council. If irregularities are indeed discovered, continued Silberberg, the German government hopes that the IRIG will react appropriately.

¶5. (C) Sheikh Attar responded that the Iranian Embassy had been in contact with Tehran and had contacted several German journalists in Tehran to offer their assistance. Regarding the "special cases", Sheikh Attar noted that the IRIG was "only concerned about their safety." Sheikh Attar also promised to convey the German government's concerns about the safety of the diplomatic corps and the German community.

BERLIN 00000717 002 OF 002

Sheikh Attar then said that some international media, specifically VOA and the BBC, were "inciting the public to participate in illegal demonstrations" and said this was interference in Iran's internal affairs. He added that the IRIG had no problem with peaceful demonstrators, but added that "no cop on earth would hand out flowers to violent protesters." Silberberg countered Sheikh Attar's statements noting that no statement by the German government could be interpreted as interfering with internal Iranian affairs; furthermore, the press is simply doing its job, he added. He closed by urging the IRIG to restore the media's ability to work and pressed him in particular on human rights issues.

¶6. (C) Krueger noted to Iranwatcher that since FM Steinmeier's comments to the media on June 14, a number of other EU member states had informed the MFA that they were considering summoning the Iranian ambassador in their respective capital for similar discussions. He noted that the French Government had already conducted such a discussion, and that the Iranian Ambassador to France reportedly had been highly critical of the French government and in particular of French FM Kouchner.

Koenig